

Americans spend more than \$400 billion annually on recreational goods and services. Recreation is a very important positive economic and social force in America today. Recreation is a part of all American lives – the old and the young, the fit and the disabled, the affluent and the poor. There is an amazing mosaic of for-profit and not-for profit organizations and government agencies, which are at work supporting recreation and protecting the shared legacy of America's public lands. —Dave Humphreys

The private sector plays a major role in the provision of recreation opportunities, as well as in the management and stewardship of the Commonwealth's open space and natural resources. Private sector involvement includes individual citizens, organizations, corporations and businesses. The *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)* supports private investment in recreational endeavors, including the provision of quality recreational facilities and services, as well as the promotion of conservation and land stewardship. Without a diversity of private sector partnerships, the level of service and properties available to the public for outdoor recreation and conservation initiatives would be limited.



Hampton Park in Midlothian an East West Partners community.
Photo by East West Partners

Findings

- Public use of private lands and waters for fishing, hunting, hiking and other recreational pursuits is an important component of supply to meet recreation demand. However, private lands open for public recreation are declining due to ownership changes, property size reduction, more restrictive access policies, insurance issues and landowner opposition (USFS).

- The public sector actively encourages private investment in recreation sites, facilities and services on public lands (USFS).
- Corporations, nonprofit groups, churches, individuals and historic preservation organizations contribute significantly, through land use agreements and partnerships, to the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities and the preservation of open space and natural resources.
- There are opportunities to market Virginia-grown products and agri-tourism alongside outdoor recreation.
- There is a change in land holdings of forestlands from large timber companies to others not involved in forest management. This could result in the long-term loss of the renewable resource, forest habitat and lands open for traditional forest recreation.
- Increased public access to both public and private properties using exchanges, easements, acquisitions and partnerships will be necessary to meet recreation demand in the future.
- Children and adults spend less time outdoors in nature, which negatively affects their health and well-being.
- Nonprofits, churches and foundations with a mission other than outdoor recreation or conservation may use land as leverage or to turn a profit when the organization is financially stressed.

Recommendations

- Recreational use agreements or easements should be encouraged for private property owners to make more private lands available for recreation.
- Efforts should be made by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to make existing and potential private sector providers of outdoor recreation knowledgeable about the Virginia Landowner Liability Law, especially where applicable to trails and greenways development.

Private Sector

- The private sector is encouraged to coordinate with state and local parks and recreation agencies to determine how to supplement outdoor recreation.
- Local, state and federal outdoor recreation providers should support corporate recognition programs and improve corporate recognition for small business willing to incorporate outdoor recreation needs in an environmentally friendly manner.
- Private sector health and outdoor recreation providers should partner to support further research and linkage of healthy lifestyles with outdoor recreation.
- Employers should identify ways to promote an active lifestyle both inside and outside the agencies.
- Develop publications listing the location of local farmers markets, craft centers, wineries and home based industries so that travelers may have opportunities to purchase Virginia products. This could be done with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, Virginia Farm Bureau, Local and State Chambers of Commerce
- Encourage federal, state and local outdoor recreation providers to partner with multiple private sector organizations.

Types of private recreation providers

Private recreation providers are important to all types of recreation. These providers help to meet the demand in communities across the Commonwealth for high quality, convenient recreation facilities. Active outdoor providers may include private facilities for all terrain vehicles, horseback riding, mountain biking, hang gliding, swimming, zip line courses, geocaching, rock climbing and canine training and tracking courses. Passive outdoor providers may include private hunting facilities, especially hunt clubs, hiking paths, fishing piers, picnicking, bird watching and nature photography. Private community centers such as the YMCA and community related organizations offer gyms, weightlifting and workout facilities, racquetball, tennis, bowling, swimming and fitness classes. Private commercial facilities may include indoor shooting ranges, paint ball ranges, miniature golf courses, amusement parks, exercise facilities, indoor swimming and skating rinks. Resorts and clubs including golf courses, skiing, snow boarding, tennis and racquet sports also help meet recreational needs within specific sectors of the population.



Skiing is most often provided at private resort locations. Photo by Ed LaDoux, Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Virginia Tourism promotes outdoor recreation

Virginia Tourism Corporation compiles both public and private outdoor recreation data related to tourism. Virginia's Outdoor Guide Search is a feature on the Virginia Tourism Corporation website that assists citizens in planning outdoor trips. The website sorts information by locality, region and types of recreation. www.virginia.org/site/main.asp?referrer=outdoors

2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey

The 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* (VOS) showed that citizens use publicly-owned facilities approximately 73 percent of time and private facilities the remaining 27 percent of time for outdoor recreation activities. Some outdoor facilities lend themselves to the use of private lands or commercially developed outdoor recreation facilities. Activities involving large land areas most often incorporate more frequent use of private lands. The 2006 survey indicated that horseback riding,

Table IX-5. Recreation on Public and Private Lands

Activity	Percent Use of Public Lands	Percent Use of Private Lands	Unknown if lands are public or private
Horseback riding	26.2	69.3	4.5
Hunting	33.1	65.6	1.3
Snow skiing, snow boarding	41.8	55.4	2.8
Driving motorcycles off-road	41.1	48.4	10.4
Driving 4-wheel vehicles off-road	55.7	37.2	7
Tennis	64	33.7	2.3
Golf	63.2	32.5	4.3
Jet-ski, personal watercraft	64.8	31.4	3.8
Basketball	75.2	23.9	0.9
Football	73	23.4	3.6
Volleyball	73	23.4	3.6
Water skiing	71.9	23.3	4.8
Rafting	79.7	23.3	4.8
Sailing, sail boarding	73.7	21.7	4.6
Skateboarding	74.1	21.1	4.9
Tubing	74.4	20.2	5.5
Power boating	75.2	19.5	5.3
Inline skating	80.5	19.5	0
Visiting gardens, arboretums	75.6	18.2	6.2
Freshwater Fishing	79.7	16.9	3.4
Canoeing, kayaking, rowing	80.9	15.4	3.7
Sunbathing, relaxing on beach	82.9	14.7	2.4
Soccer	82.1	14	3.9
Nature study, program	85.8	12	2.2
Saltwater Fishing	86.5	11	2.5
Jogging	86.3	8.8	4.8
Walking	86.3	8.5	5.2
Baseball	88.4	8.2	3.3
Softball	87.9	8	4.1
Birdwatching (away from home)	82.7	6.9	10.4
Other bicycling	89.7	6.4	3.9
Camping	39.4	5.7	54.9
Playground	92	5.7	2.2
Picnicking	90.7	5.4	4
Off-road, mountain biking	94.6	4.7	0.7
Visiting natural areas, preserves, refuges	88.1	4.5	7.4
Fitness trail	93	4	2.8
Hike, backpack	91	3.6	5.4

hunting, snow skiing and snow boarding, and driving motorcycles off-road were more apt to use private lands for these activities. Table IX-1 summarizes the percentage of private vs. public lands for each outdoor activity surveyed.

Corporate support and partnerships

Corporate support and partnerships have grown over the past five to 10 years. Many corporations are able to donate funds to outdoor recreation and conservation. In some cases, it is advantageous for corporations to donate land or dedicate lands into conservation easements. There are a wealth of existing and potential partnerships for outdoor recreation, stewardship and conservation among corporations, nonprofits and governmental agencies. Many corporations are well respected within their communities as excellent land stewards and protectors of the environment. Larger corporations are particularly sensitive to community outreach, as well as incorporation of internal environmental programs like ISO 14000, which is a series of international standards on environmental management (www.iso14000-iso14001-environmental-management.com).

Traditionally, timber companies provided public access to recreation on their lands. Many of the large paper companies like WESTVACO, Bear Island, International Paper, Georgia Pacific, Grelf Brothers and others provide access to their properties for hiking, hunting and nature study. Partnership agreements have been made with state agencies like DCR for the use of their properties. The current trend for large timber companies to divest their land interests may affect the acreage of forestlands in Virginia. While many governmental agencies may be interested in purchasing these lands from the private sector, many acres are being sold to owners with land development interests. These landowners may not manage the forests as a renewable resource, which could jeopardize the longevity of Virginia land available for outdoor recreation and conservation.

In addition to outdoor recreation facility providers, a cooperative health and outdoor recreation initiative would be cost effective in meeting the needs for health and outdoor recreation. Such a partnership involving private, public and nonprofit organizations would further active-living initiatives and help decrease rising health care costs over time. Linking outdoor recreation opportunities to health and wellness makes economic sense and would result in better quality of life for all citizens of the Commonwealth.



Many private sector residential developments like River Watch in Gloucester offer opportunities for walking for pleasure. Photo by East West Partners.

Many small businesses and for-profit service providers also support outdoor recreation and athletic endeavors in communities across Virginia. Opportunities to link leading sports and athletic community concerns with environmentally-friendly practices may further strengthen partnerships with small businesses. There is a growing movement among small business, especially those that depend on natural resources, to “go green,” thereby gaining an economic advantage, improving marketing and helping the environment.

One such partnership developed with a small business using seed funds from a grant initiated by a local nonprofit organization. This small business is spearheading an effort to implement a greenway adjacent to their property by becoming proactively involved in negotiations with adjacent property owners and the county. The Richmond Outdoor Sports Experience (RISE), located in Chesterfield County, provides indoor playing fields and lessons for soccer, volleyball and baseball. The 2-acre RISE building sits in an industrial park adjacent to a stream. The project began in partnership with DCR, Chesterfield County and local nonprofit organizations. The owners of RISE first designed and installed a BayScape landscape along with educational signage to serve as a trailhead to a greenway surrounding the site. Long-term plans in working with Chesterfield County and nonprofit partners are to extend the greenway outside the RISE property boundaries along the stream, which would link the facility to a school and other recreational facilities.

Nonprofit contributions

Nonprofit organizations are often intimately familiar with the local community. Nonprofits target needs within their area of interest and identify stakeholder groups. The role of a nonprofit often depends on its mission and goals. Nonprofits involved in outdoor recreation, conservation and environmental stewardship often are the perfect liaison in forming partnerships with businesses and government. One of the advantages in working with nonprofit organizations are the resources the boards of directors bring to the organization.

There are 150 nonprofits operating in Virginia that work on conservation, land management stewardship and environmental education. The types of projects led by nonprofits may include the following.

- Conservation easements
- Land donations
- Greenways and trails additions
- Land management agreements
- Implementation of low impact design alternatives
- Promotion of land stewardship and conservation education
- River cleanups
- River corridor management
- Scenic vista management

Outdoor recreation facilities

Often the management and maintenance of locally-owned recreation facilities are greatly enhanced through public-private partnerships. Athletic associations in many communities will adopt facilities and help maintain the property or raise funds to provide improved facilities. In addition, locally initiated programs such as adopt-a-trail or statewide Adopt-A-Stream (www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil_&_water/adopt.shtml) programs will improve the condition and long-term sustainability of outdoor recreation properties.

Conservation

Nonprofit groups and individual activities contribute much to the total effort of preserving natural and historic resources. Among such groups are The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Izaak Walton League of America, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, service clubs and many others. Historic preservation organizations, such as the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, APVA Preservation Virginia

and the Civil War Trust, also contribute significantly to the preservation of open space and natural resources that have public value and help to maintain the resources that define the character of the Commonwealth. Unless easements are placed on these private lands for recreational and conservation uses, there is no guarantee that these facilities will be available for future generations. Often nonprofits and foundations with a mission other than outdoor recreation or conservation will use land as leverage or to turn a profit when the organization is financially stressed.

The evolution of private recreational lands: Sandy Point State Forest

Approximately 2,000 acres along the Mattaponi River in King William County has provided a myriad of recreational opportunities in the community. In the late 1940s, the property was purchased by the Chesapeake Corp. to manage as working forestland supporting Chesapeake's industrial needs. During that time, a small beach was leased to a private association that provided river access. Beginning in the 1980s, recreational uses of the property expanded to include pen-raised game bird hunting. The Nature Conservancy purchased the property in the 1990s and continued to allow public access for various recreational uses, including waterfowl hunting, upland game hunting and birdwatching. In 2002, the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF), supported financially by the Forest Legacy program and the U.S. Forest Service, purchased the property. The DOF goal for the property, which has become known as Sandy Point State Forest, combined outdoor recreation with forest management practices. Over time, this property has become increasingly important in meeting community needs for recreation. At any point in the history of land ownership for Sandy Point State Forest, the property could have been sold to one or more land developers and recreational access eliminated. It is more common for properties that have served as long-term recreational lands managed by private organizations to be sold for greater profit and to be developed.

Corporate stewardship

Nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies often partner to administer recognition programs for private sector businesses and to encourage corporate stewardship.

Corporate stewardship recognition programs

Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program's Clean Marina Program

www.vims.edu/adv/vamarina

There are approximately 1,000 marinas and 230,000 boaters in the tidal waters of Virginia that share in the scenic beauty, economic benefits and general use of Virginia's waterways. The Virginia Clean Marinas Program is a voluntary program funded and initiated by the Virginia CZM Program to help reduce nonpoint pollution.

Businesses for the Bay

www.chesapeakebay.net/b4bay.htm

Businesses for the Bay is a voluntary team of forward-looking businesses, industries, government facilities and other organizations within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The program is sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Program for businesses that are committed to implementing pollution prevention in daily operations and reducing releases of chemical contaminants and other wastes to the Chesapeake Bay.

Builders for the Bay

www.cwp.org/builders_for_bay.htm

Builders for the Bay is aimed at reducing environmental impacts from residential and commercial construction within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Under the leadership of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Center for Watershed Protection and the National Association of Home Builders, Builders for the Bay encourages the voluntary adoption of better site design principles that reduce the environmental effects of residential and commercial development.

Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards for Manufacturers

www.vamanufacturers.com/geea/product_application.php

Virginia Manufacturer's Association sponsors the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards for Manufacturers that are supported by Virginia's Governor, Secretary of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality. This awards program encourages Virginia's industries to develop new products that will enhance the state's pollution prevention policy and to help industry practice excellent environmental stewardship by recognizing outstanding efforts in this area each year.

The Nature Conservancy's Safe Harbor Program

www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/virginia/press/press135.html

The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and Environmental Defense cooperatively developed Virginia's Safe Harbor program in 1995. In January 2001, International Paper became the first private landowner in Virginia to enroll in The Nature Conservancy's "Safe Harbor" program in Sussex County. Forest owners who voluntarily enroll in Safe Harbor agree, for a specified period, to restore or improve their land as woodpecker habitat. In exchange, they avoid future regulatory restrictions on the use of their land should red-cockaded woodpeckers, protected under the Endangered Species Act, become established on their property.

Community support for outdoor recreation and active living

The entire community is needed to promote physical activity. According to *Shaping America's Youth*, more than 80 percent of organizations that fund childhood obesity-related programs are either nonprofit or government, with for-profit businesses and corporations supporting less than 20 percent of ongoing programs.

Employers should promote active living through workplace-based programming. Workplace practices can play a key role in encouraging physical activity. Because an active workforce is an asset, workplace wellness is becoming increasingly important. Bon Secours Richmond Health System reports 81 percent of American businesses with more than 50 employees have workplace health promotion programs. In the Second Tri-Annual Buffet Taylor National Wellness Survey, the top four reasons why Canadian companies offer worksite wellness programs is because healthy employees are a valuable asset (27.3 percent), to promote a healthy lifestyle (25.6 percent), to reduce absenteeism (14.3 percent) and to contain the costs of benefit programs (10.1 percent).

Some churches in Virginia provide trails, gyms and active recreation leagues for adults and children. These faith-based initiatives often integrate healthy living into congregational messages. For example, the Faith Cardiovascular Health Project launched programs in 49 ministries within five regions of Virginia to initiate walking trails, nutritional awareness, blood pressure checks and specific interventions designed to promote public health.

Individual property owners providing recreation

Many private landowners allow the public to use their lands and waters for fishing, hunting, hiking and other similar types of recreational pursuits. This has been confirmed by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' assistance to private landowners for the management of 12,000 to 15,000 acres of land for hunting, fishing and other wildlife recreation related activities. Also, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation in 1988 authorizing DCR to establish long-term contracts to develop privately owned recreational facilities on department lands. This legislation allows for increased public-private cooperation in the development of recreational opportunities in the Commonwealth.



All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) trails are often on private lands. Photo by Cynthia Turner.

Agri-entertainment and Agri-tourism are new, highly consumer-focused types of agriculture and may offer additional options for diversification and adding stability to farm incomes. Farmers have invented a wide variety of "entertainment farming" options. Types of entertainment farming are picking vegetables, Christmas tree farming and navigating corn mazes and have become popular recreation destinations. Also the significance of sustainable farms and local agricultural providers represented most frequently at farmer's markets highlights the benefits of farming from an ecological and economic perspective. Furthermore, the benefits of farms, agriculture and forests to scenic character and tourism must not be understated (See Chapter II-C: Scenic Resources). These local agricultural industries are also important for Virginia's local food security, encouraging linkages with local community markets and distributors,

enhancing the sustainability of local food systems, and connecting Virginia's farmers and farm products with Virginia's communities through recreation.

Garden Tours and Garden Club Week provide an outlet for recreation and increase awareness for protection of sites, as do horticultural events and visiting botanical gardens and nurseries. Many nurseries provide horticulture and gardening classes and seminars to further understanding and enjoyment of gardening experiences.

The American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) is a bi-national nonprofit membership organization of professionals, volunteers and supporters of community greening in urban and rural communities. The Association recognizes that community gardening improves the quality of life for people by providing a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulating social interaction, encouraging self-reliance, beautifying neighborhoods, producing nutritious food, reducing family food budgets, conserving resources and creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy and education. Community gardens also improve water quality by absorbing and recycling rainwater if properly sited.

There is a sense of growing reticence for property owners to allow recreation on private lands. High rates of insurance create a problem for some activities, such as equestrian concessions. Even though Virginia has an excellent land use liability law to protect private landowners who offer public access for recreation (see Chapter VIII), landowners wishing to offer fee-based recreation services must protect their liability by obtaining appropriate insurance coverage.

Selected resources and references:

American Community Garden Association.
www.communitygarden.org

Chesapeake Congregations.
www.toad.net/%7Ecassandra/cheshome.htm

National Governors Association. 2005. *Policy Paper: NR-14. Recreation Resources Policy.*

National Sustainable Agriculture Information System.
<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/entertainment.html>

U.S. Forest Service. 2003. *An Analysis of the Outdoor Recreation and Wilderness Situation in the United States: 1989-2040.* U.S. Department of Agriculture. www.fs.fed.us/pl/rpa/rec89.htm

U.S. Forest Service. *Forests on the Edge.* U.S. Department of Agriculture. www.fs.fed.us/projects/fote



Hampton Park fun area in Midlothian. Photo by East West Partners.